REMARKS

Claims 14-19 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. §102(e) as being anticipated by Mohi et al., U.S. 2003/0195008.

The Examiner's rejection is respectfully traversed.

Independent claim 14 has now been amended to recite an operation instructing terminal, carried by an operations manager. The terminal comprises means for acquiring operation instructions from an instruction center side; a storage section for storing acquired operation instruction content; means for presenting the acquired operation instruction content to the operations manager; means for collecting information relating to operating conditions of a terminal; means for carrying out processing to make it impossible to refer to information about a sought person included in the operation instruction content stored in the storage section if the collected information related to operating conditions satisfies previously set operation stop conditions; and means for carrying out processing to make it impossible to refer to information concerning a sought person included in the operation instruction content stored in the storage section, in accordance with an instruction acquired from the instruction center.

Independent claim 15 now recites a search supporting system containing a center side device and a plurality of search supporting devices possessed by each search staff, wherein; the center side device comprises means for transmitting a search instruction to a specific search supporting terminal possessed by a search manager selected from among search staff managing a search of a person being sought; and means for providing information about the sought person relating to a received search request only in response

to a request from the specific search supporting device, wherein the search supporting devices comprises means for receiving a search instruction from the center side device; and means for setting the search supporting devices to be capable of requesting the center side device for information concerning the sought person only when the search instruction is received.

Independent claim 16 now recites a search supporting system, comprising a transmitter carried by a sought person; a center side device and a search supporting device possessed by every search manage. The transmitter comprises means for acquiring current position information; and means for transmitting the current position information to the center side device. The search supporting device comprises means for acquiring current position information; and means for transmitting the current position information and a request for sought person information to the center side device. The center side device comprises means for holding a plurality of items of information relating to a sought person and respective security levels in a correlated manner; means for receiving current position information of a search supporting device and a request for sought person information from the search supporting device; means for calculating information on a relative positional relationship between a transmitter carried by a sought person and a search supporting device based on current position information of the search supporting device; means for determining a disclosable security level based on the relative positional relationship information; and means for providing information about sought persons up to a security level set as disclosable to a requesting search supporting device based on the determination such that, as the search manager approaches closer to the sought person, sought person information having higher security levels are provided.

Claim 17 has been amended to be dependent on claim 15 and now recites a search supporting system of claim 15, wherein each search supporting device comprising means for acquiring sought person information from the center side device means for storing the acquired sought person information~~,~~ ; means for providing the acquired sought person information to a search manger; and means for deleting the stored sought person information upon receipt of a search completion instruction input from a search manager.

Independent claim 19 now recites a search supporting device, possessed by a search manager, comprising means for detecting its own current position; means for acquiring current position of a transmitter carried by a sought person; means for calculating a relative positional relationship of itself and the transmitter based on the detected own current position information and the current position of the transmitter; means for receiving and storing a plurality of items of information relating to sought persons from a center side together with respective security level attributes; and means for determining disclosable security levels according to the calculated relative positional relationship and providing to a search manager information, among stored information relating to sought persons, such that, as the search manager approaches closer to the sought person, those information having higher security levels are provided.

The present invention serves to protect information about a sought person from being unnecessarily disclosed, even to the search managers in charge of search of the sought person, by restrictively permitting disclosure of only the information that is currently required.

With respect to amended claim 14, Mohi et al. '008 does not describe or suggest a means for carrying out processing to make it impossible to refer to information about a sought person included in the operation instruction content stored in the storage section if the collected information related to operating conditions satisfies previously set operation stop conditions, or in accordance with an instruction center.

In claim 14, the "previously set operation stop conditions" relate to the judgment as to whether a predetermined period of time has elapsed from a registration operation at the operation instructing terminal. Further, an "instruction acquired from the instruction center" denotes an instruction from the instruction center based on a setting for a lost state applied when the operation instructing terminal is lost.

Mohi et al. '008, in paragraph 0023, describes that the controller shows "a history of the position of the rover, the height and velocity of the rover and other useful information." The Examiner seems to be of the opinion that the recitation "other useful information" corresponds to the "collected information" and "instruction".

However, the term "other useful information" of Mohi et al. only denotes information that have significant equivalence to "a history of the position of the rover and the height and velocity of the rover" for the operation manager, that is, information that is useful for searching the rover, or positive information supporting the search.

In contrast, the phrase "collected information and instruction" of claim 14 refers to the information and instruction which make it impossible to refer to information about a sought person included in the operation instruction content. In other words, the "collected information and instruction" is negative information provided for discontinuing the search when a predetermined period of time has elapsed or when the

operation instructing terminal is lost. This feature is provided because the invention of claim 14 is directed to protecting personal information of the rover (information about the sought person) with respect to searchers (operations managers).

With respect to amended claim 15, Mohi et al. '008 does not describe or suggest means for providing information about the sought person relating to a received search request only in response to a request from the specific search supporting device, wherein the search supporting devices comprise means for receiving a search instruction from the center side device, and means for setting the search supporting devices to be capable of requesting the center side device for information concerning the sought person only when the search instruction is received.

The Examiner appears to be of the opinion that the "controller unit operation method" described in Mohi et al. in paragraph 0059 corresponds to the configuration of claim 15, based on the belief that the controller unit of Mohi et al. performs a control for providing information about the rover in response to a person searching the rover.

However, claim 15 as amended recites that control is performed to protect information about the sought person from being disclosed to searchers other than the selected search managers.

With respect to amended independent claim 16, Mohi et al '008 does not describe or suggest means for holding a plurality of items of information relating to a sought person and respective security levels in a correlated manner; means for determining a disclosable security level based on the relative positional relationship information; and means for providing information about sought persons up to a security level set as disclosable to a requesting search supporting device based on the determination such that,

as the search manager approaches closer to the sought person, sought person information having higher security levels is provided.

Paragraph 0116 of Mohi et al. '008 recites " for the system to function safely, privacy and security issues should also be considered" and, regarding security concerns, that "only the child's parents must be able to find the child and not anyone else who possesses a controller and happens to get the child's rover number." The Examiner appears to be of the opinion that these features in Mohi et al. correspond to claim 16.

The term "security" as referred to in Mohi et al. '008 relates to protecting the child's information from being leaked to persons other than the parents who actually must search the child. In contrast, "security" as recited in claim 16 is achieved by taking into consideration the relative positional relationship between the search manager and the sought person, and refraining from disclosing sought person information having high security levels to the search manager from the early stages of the search. For example, when the relative distance is large, only the positional information of the sought person is disclosed and the personal information of the sought person is disclosed only when the relative distance becomes small.

Claim 16 recites that not all of the information relating to a sought person is initially disclosed, even to a searcher who is in charge of the search of the sought person.

Claim 17 has now been amended to depend from claim 15.

With respect to independent claim 19, Applicants contend that Mohi et al. '008 does not describe means for determining disclosable security levels according to the calculated relative positional relationship and providing to a search manager information, among stored information relating to sought persons, such that, as the search manager

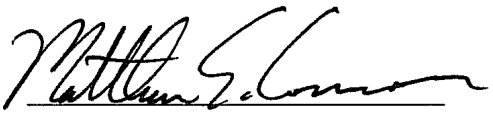
approaches closer to the sought person, the information having higher security levels is provided. The arguments presented with respect to claim 16 apply similarly to claim 19.

In view of the foregoing comments, Applicants respectfully contend that Mohi et al. '008 does not anticipate the invention as defined in claims 14-23 under the provisions of 35 USC §102. Accordingly, Applicants submit that the claims are patentable over the prior art of record.

The application is now considered to be in condition for allowance, and an early indication of same is requested.

The Commissioner is authorized to charge Deposit Order Account No. 19-0079 for any further fee that is required or credit this account for any overpayment that is received in connection with the accompanying Response for the referenced application.

Respectfully submitted,



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